

BLOOMINGTON ARTS COMMISSION (BAC)

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Nov 13, 2013 meeting, McCloskey Conference Room

ATTENDING: Peter Jacobi, Paul Sturm, Jean Kautt , Martina Celerin, Jan Grant, Alain Barker, Abby Henkel, Craig Widen, Lynn Schwartzberg

ABSENT: Sally Gaskill, Mary Norman

EX OFFICIO: Miah Michaelson (City staff liaison), Susan Sandberg (City Council)

GUESTS: none

Jan Grant called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (grant recipients) October 9, 2013

Peter motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Craig seconded; motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT – report by Craig

As submitted in email

STAFF REPORTS – reports by Miah, as per email, and in addition:**Public Art**

We will reconvene the new projects committee shortly - they will have something to discuss regarding the Walnut Street Gateway project.

There is discussion regarding a possible dedication/opening for the 4th St. Gateway project. We are waiting to hear back from Lois and Reza.

Upcoming Meetings

Miah reminded us that there will be a BEAD meeting on Monday. She also mentioned that Theatre Consortium meetings have been taking place. Peter asked about the purpose of the consortium. Miah explained that it will be involved in promoting theater as a destination. Alain mentioned that it will include Opera under the umbrella of theater. Miah noted that, in the IAC report, theater has taken the biggest hit among the arts. Paul mentioned that he worked with Windfall Dance Company on creating a new strategic plan. He worked for five hours on a Sunday and was helpful in having them craft a vision statement and going through their previous strategic plan. The organization spent this past-, and the prior board meetings fleshing out the strategic plan. He hopes that they will have a new strategic plan in place in January. Currently, they are midstream in the process and he will do a full report to us later when the process is closer to completion. Paul was a founding member of Windfall as the Music Director. Alain thanked Paul for taking up the call for help.

Arts Leadership

Ivy Tech is considering an arts leadership awards program. Miah gave them a list of names of arts organizations that they should keep in mind. Ivy Tech is looking for a high profile way to support their arts for kids program and scholarships for that program. Paul asked, "isn't Cardinal thinking about doing something similar that would involve arts awards as fundraisers." Miah said yes. Alain noted that these organizations are reaching out to fill a void that exists in our arts community. Miah reminded us that Ivy Tech is the regional arts partner. Lynn noted that Cardinal is attempting to honor people that have some connection to Cardinal and that they are not necessarily interested in a broader award system.

Miah also mentioned that the IAC is doing a Café Strategic Planning session on Thursday, December 5 at 10 AM at the Waldron. It will be a live webinar/conference call where attendees are encouraged to participate in the strategic planning. More information will follow from Miah.

We were delighted to hear that in Portland this weekend the Stanley Cup of marketing awards was won by Visit Bloomington and BEAD a.k.a the 2013 Destination Arts Marketing Award presented by the Americans for the Arts program. Jean asked whether they showed the specific examples of the marketing that won the award. Miah said that it was the destination grant program.

OLD BUSINESS

There was a survey given to the grantees and Miah will share the summaries at the December meeting. Someone asked if all the council members are getting a "thank you" from the grant recipients. Miah said yes, and Susan Sandberg noted that she thought it was a great idea.

NEW BUSINESS

Meeting with Mayor

Miah sent out summary notes from the meeting with the Mayor. Jan thought it was a wonderful, interactive discussion. The discussion turned to the strategic plan discussion based on the notes with the Mayor. Peter mentioned that he is very pleased with the enthusiasm that the Mayor brings to art in the area. However, there are two things that bother him: the heavy emphasis on visual arts versus music and theater, and his playing down of the value of the BAC art grants. Jan mentioned that she thinks that he was taking in our concern about the importance of the grants. Lynn publicly apologized for being covered in dough at the time of the meeting and not being able to attend. Jan wanted to pose something to the BAC: within the context of the grant program, how do we feel about prioritizing grants to be more aligned with the city's priorities? Abby noted that we are giving out so little money to so few grant recipients we might end up narrowing the pool of our applicants if we attempt to do this. Miah mentioned that she would like to see the BAC as a catalyst that activates art activities rather than a response organization. Peter reminded us that we are not dealing with a lot of money. Craig suggested that, depending on what is the project, we consider partnering with businesses. Miah suggested that we might want 2013 to focus on arts patronage, for example. Jan said that we should look at the number of education grants we are funding and maybe it's audience development that we want to focus on. Peter mentioned that we need to keep in mind that we do not want to force troubled arts organizations to go into directions that they don't want to go. Martina mentioned that the phrase, arts patronage, really covers a lot of the grants that we already fund, and we could choose a phrase that would be almost all-inclusive. Miah noted that the phrase we choose or the project area that we choose might affect what we ask for in the final report from the recipient organizations. Alain noted that we've been working on building capacity, quality, and effectiveness for arts organizations as compared to focusing on the city agenda. Miah mentioned that we should be thinking about arts and where it lives in the community; there is almost nothing west of Rogers that isn't in, or associated with, the schools. She mentioned that unless we help make that as an opportunity, it might not happen. Paul noted that we report to the Mayor as well as the City Council. He mentioned that as city commissioners, we have a duty to serve our populace and it's okay to say politicians have priorities (or former governors might have agendas). He suggests that it might make sense to have a cohesive message around some goals. Paul agrees with Peter that many organizations really need the grant monies but we also need to take in the Mayor's comment that he can't make everyone happy, and he's OK with that. With that said, we must also maintain our city's diversity. It was suggested that maybe just giving one award a year and using the rest of the monies as an incentive or a catalyst for something else. Susan reminded us not to underestimate our role in this community - we are immersed in the arts and compared the situation to what's happening in the social services commission. The social services commission has a bigger pool of money but has created a priorities list: priority is given to food, shelter, and heat but not does not rule out funding education-focused projects. We might consider a funding priority for creativity and not just the same old, same old. Prioritizing the community needs will result in long-lasting effects and how we handle BAC monies for art. Craig noted that he would like to see the two rounds of grants to continue. Miah asked about a call for proposals that are more targeted to something that seeks to achieve, in a bolder way, the priorities of the city. Alain mention that we have worked hard to help build healthy organizations and now we should consider what we can be doing to align more clearly with the city's mission. He also noted that the grants have taken so much of our time that it might be taking up potential time for other activities. Miah noted that if there were

only one grant cycle then we would have more time to focus on community events. Alain asked what are we, the BAC, doing to advance community involvement in art. Abby suggested that we set our priorities for grants as well as set our priorities for public art and community art projects. Alain asked whether or not we could use half the money to give out grants and half on something else. Paul suggested that we should reframe our priorities - we should use some grant funding to grow healthy arts organizations but we should use the other half to call for a goal such as serving underserved groups or serving children. Alain noted that ArtsWeek just went away. Maybe we should look at it and analyze what worked and what might have worked. We might consider getting involved in a program of activities that takes place in a short amount of time. Maybe we should look for programs where entities have one event where they get in front of an underserved audience. Alain also noted that it is arrogant of us to think that we know where the need is greatest. Maybe we need to engage with organizations to see where they would be involved. Miah mentioned that maybe we need to get organizations to figure out what the development process should be for something new – getting them to do something with someone that they've never done anything with before. Lynn noted that Bloomington Chamber Singers, when they were involved with Diary of Anne Frank, reached out to all schools administrators but got very little response. Paul recalled that Lotus, in the early days, had no plans to do a free Saturday at 3rd St. Park, and look what it's grown into! The city provided catalytic funding but the city didn't tell them what to do, or how to do it. Alain motioned to restructure our grant funding to an annual cycle that takes place in April. Paul seconded. There was more discussion. Craig noted that we need to communicate this change ASAP to the arts organizations. Miah mentioned that we have a long list of addresses and will send the info out to them. The motion was carried unanimously. Alain asked about the next steps - what are the possible scenarios? what can we do to facilitate the process? Miah said that she will put together three scenario structures for us to look at. Lynn said that she is still concerned about asking an organization to do a project that might be construed as favoritism. Someone mentioned that we need to investigate to what extent our current strategic plan impacts and or interacts with the conversation with the Mayor. Jillian mentioned that she will make a sheet of funding mechanisms that other arts organizations have available to them and what they have funded in the past. Jillian is looking into other cities current strategic plans and that these line up pretty well with other our plan. Miah mentioned that we are considering making a public art map as part of a practicum. Finally, Miah mentioned that Lotus is offering to do a workshop for organizations: it would host various organizations that have the expertise and share that information with other arts organizations. Jan thanked all that were able to attend the meeting with the Mayor and mentioned that it was very productive.

Meeting was adjourned by Jan at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Martina Celerin